SPLASH

COUGH COUGH-
AHH!
SPLSHHH

COUGH...
-GASP-
COUGH
COUGH...

HERK-

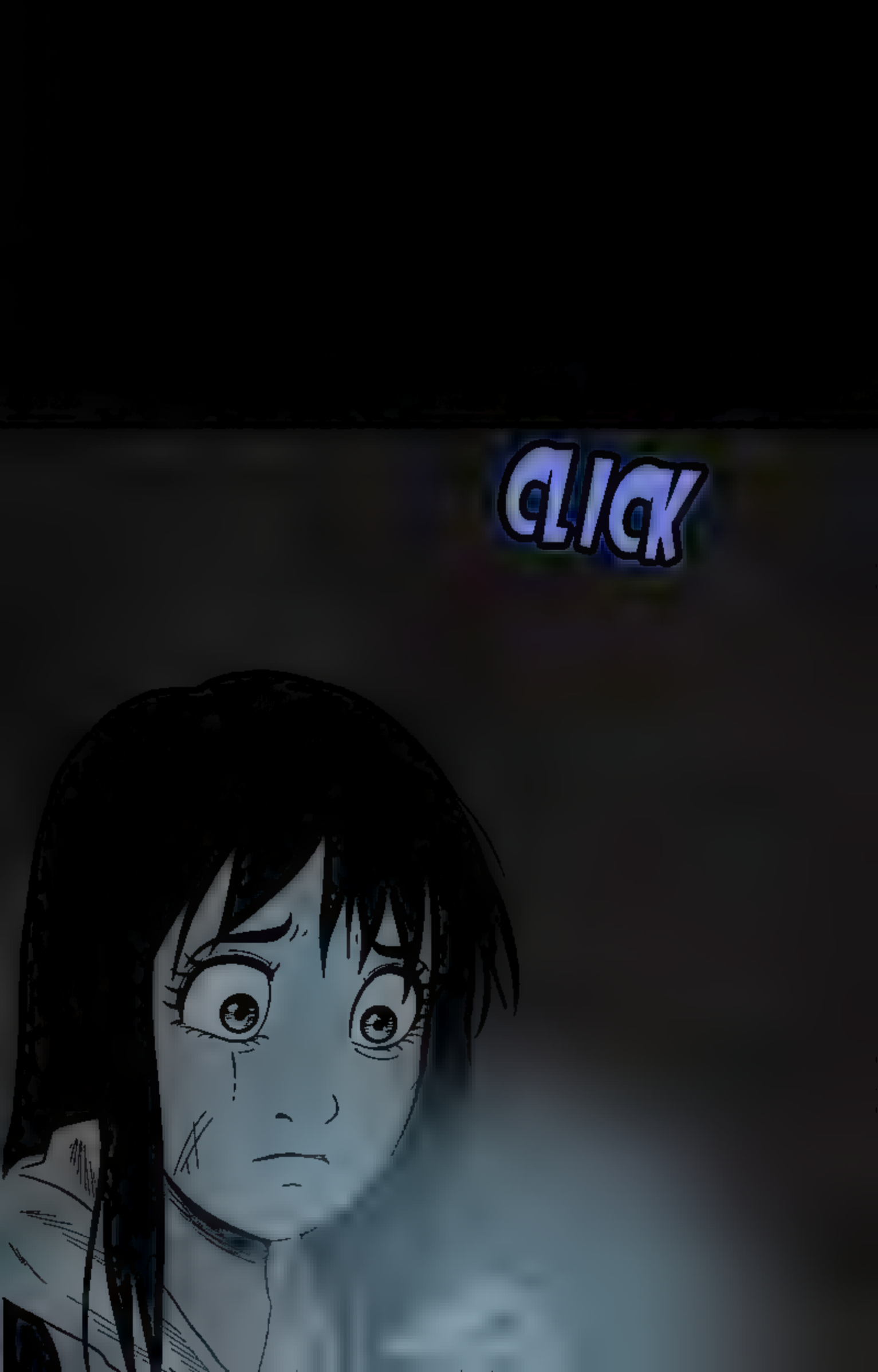
HURRGHH-

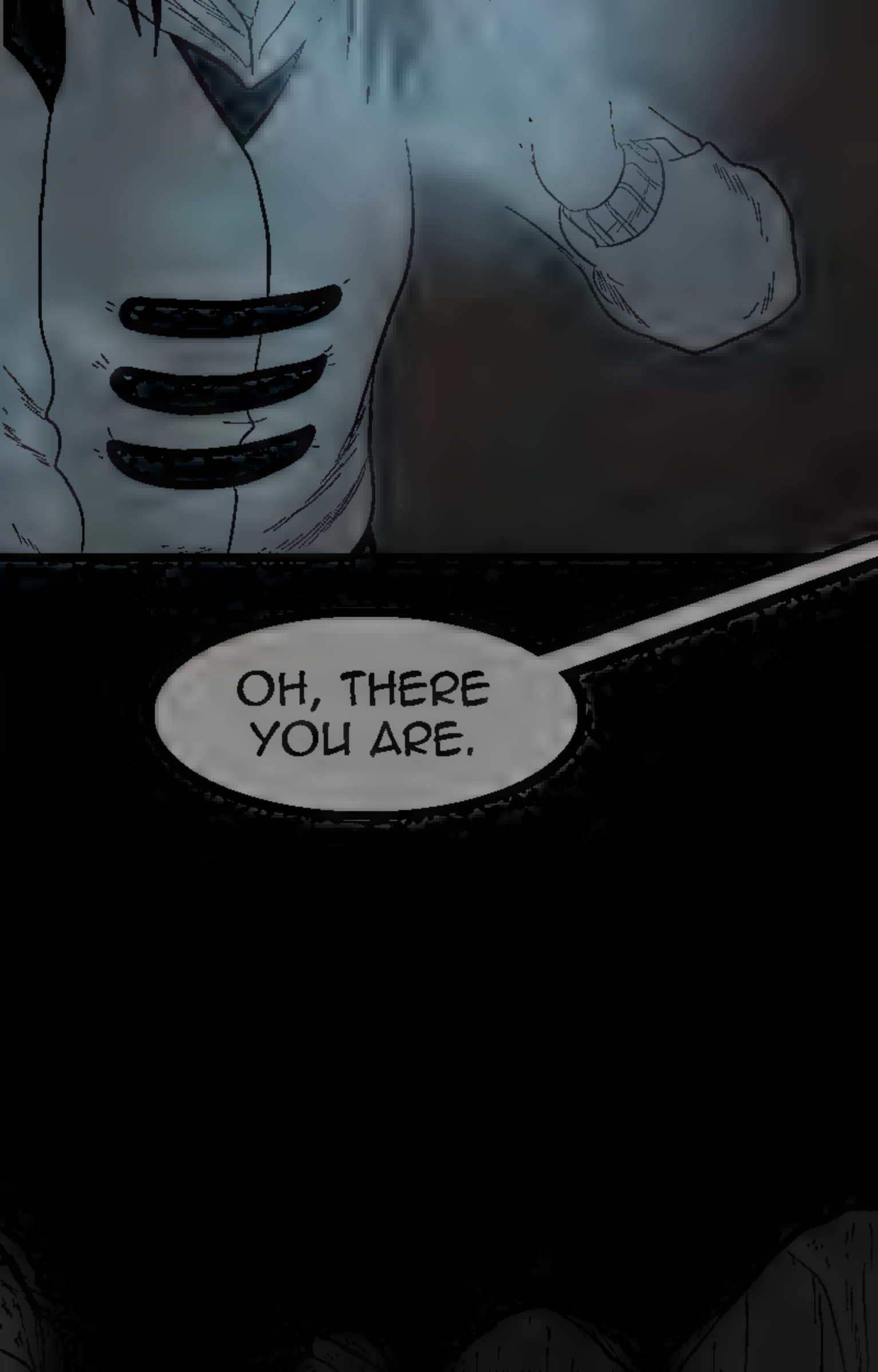
Welcome

part four

FRANKIE...
YOU OKAY?

GOD, IT'S PITCH BLACK...


CLICK


OH, THERE YOU ARE.

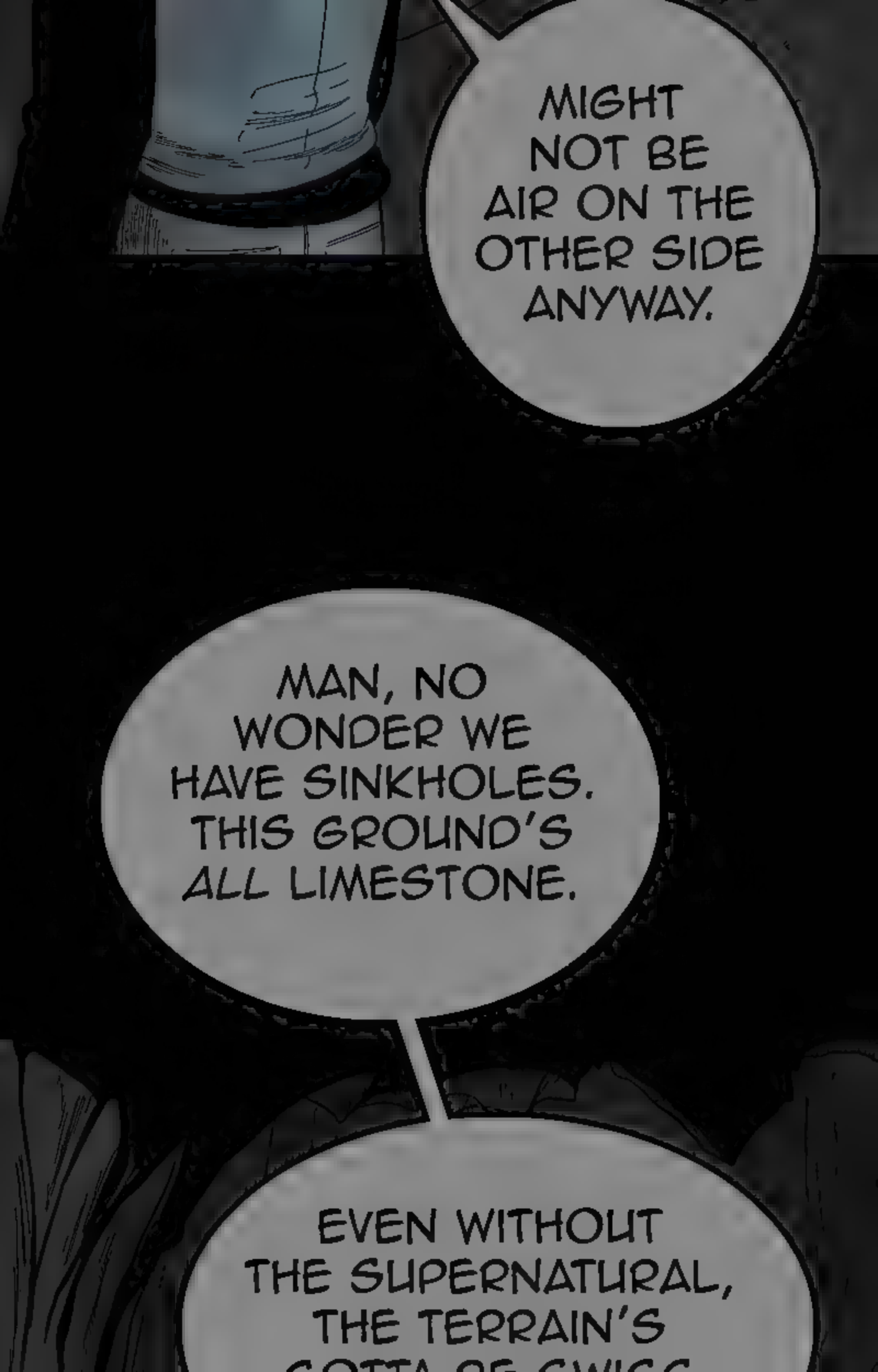
UGH, THINK I SWALLOWED MOST OF THE RIVER.

WE ARE INSANELY LUCKY FOR THIS SMALL CAVERN.
OOF-

I WAS SURE WE WERE GONNA DROWN...
OKAY, SO...
BAD NEWS FIRST: CAN'T GET OUT THE WAY WE CAME IN.

NOT WITH THAT STRONG A CURRENT.
HMMM...

THE RIVER FORWARD IS A NO-GO. TOO SMALL AN OPENING.


MIGHT NOT BE AIR ON THE OTHER SIDE ANYWAY.
MAN, NO WONDER WE HAVE SINKHOLES. THIS GROUND'S ALL LIMESTONE.
EVEN WITHOUT THE SUPERNATURAL, THE TERRAIN'S

GOTTA BE SWISS CHEESE BY NOW.
CRAZY.

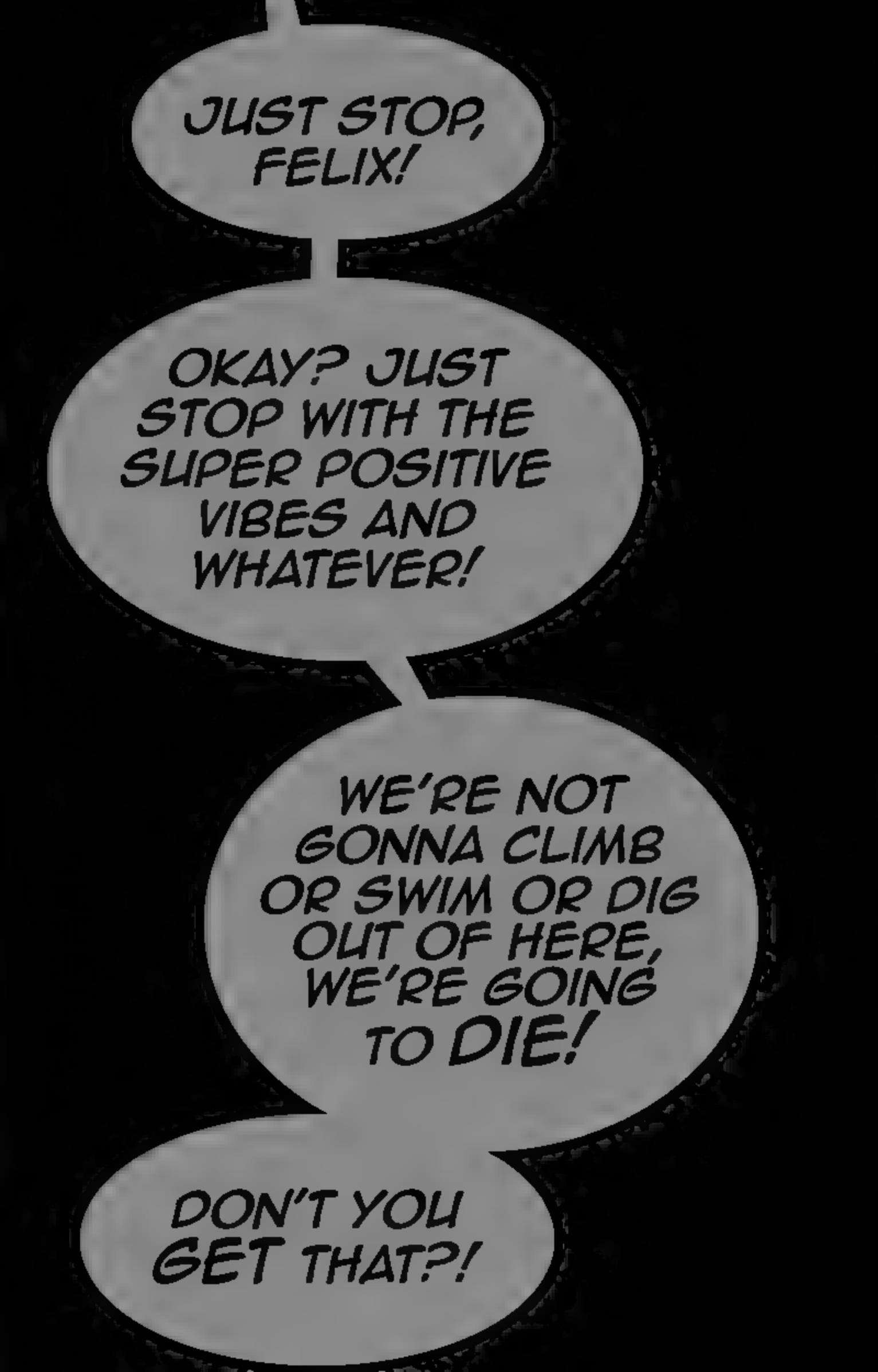
DO YOU THINK WE C-
FRANKIE?

HEY, HEY,
IT'S OKAY-
NO IT'S
NOT.

DON'T BE LIKE THAT... WE'RE ALIVE AND THAT'S WHAT MATT-
WE'RE GOING TO DIE HERE.

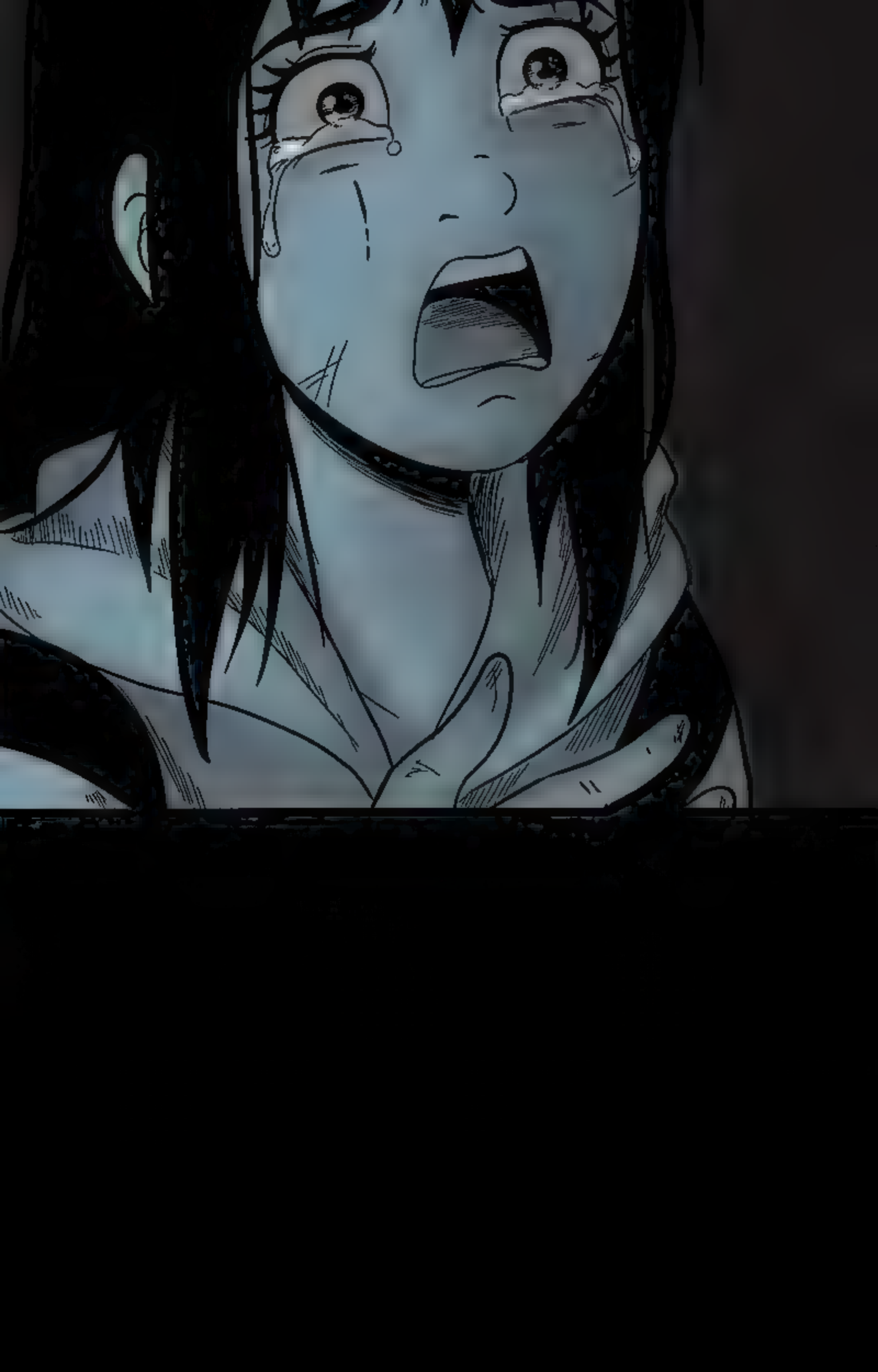
HEY, NOW. YOU DON'T KNOW TH-
WOULD YOU STOP ACTING LIKE IT'S ALL OKAY?
IT'S NOT GOING TO

BE OKAY!
FRAN, WE JUST NEED TO STAY CALM-


JUST STOP, FELIX!
OKAY? JUST STOP WITH THE SUPER POSITIVE VIBES AND WHATEVER!
WE'RE NOT GONNA CLIMB OR SWIM OR DIG OUT OF HERE, WE'RE GOING TO DIE!
DON'T YOU GET THAT?!

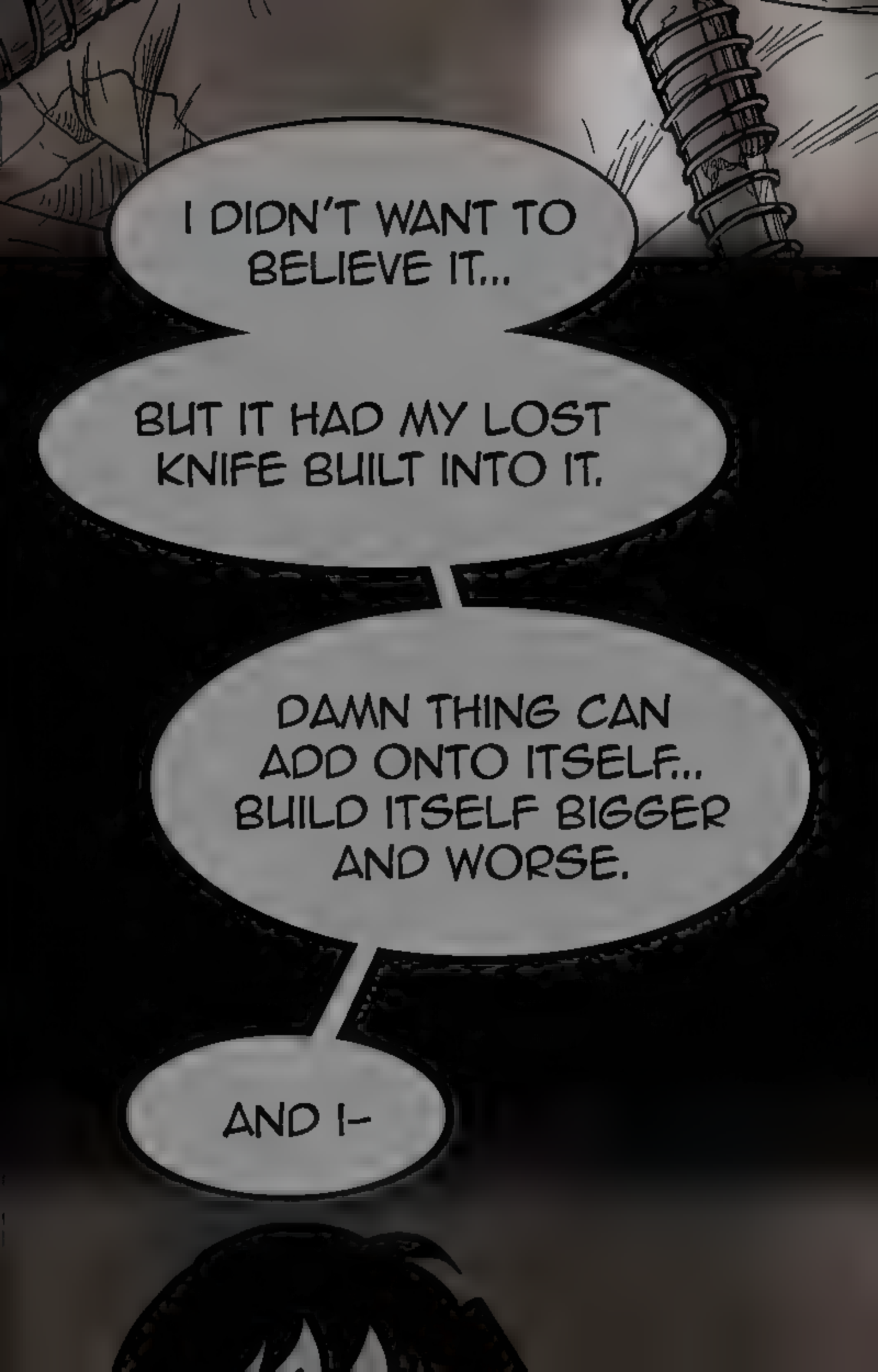
WELL WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO, FRANKIE?!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO! I'M TRYING TO KEEP US GOING!

I'M TRYING MY BEST TO NOT GIVE UP!
SO WHY ARE YOU YELLING AT ME?!
BECAUSE YOU DON'T GET IT!
THIS IS ALL MY FAULT!



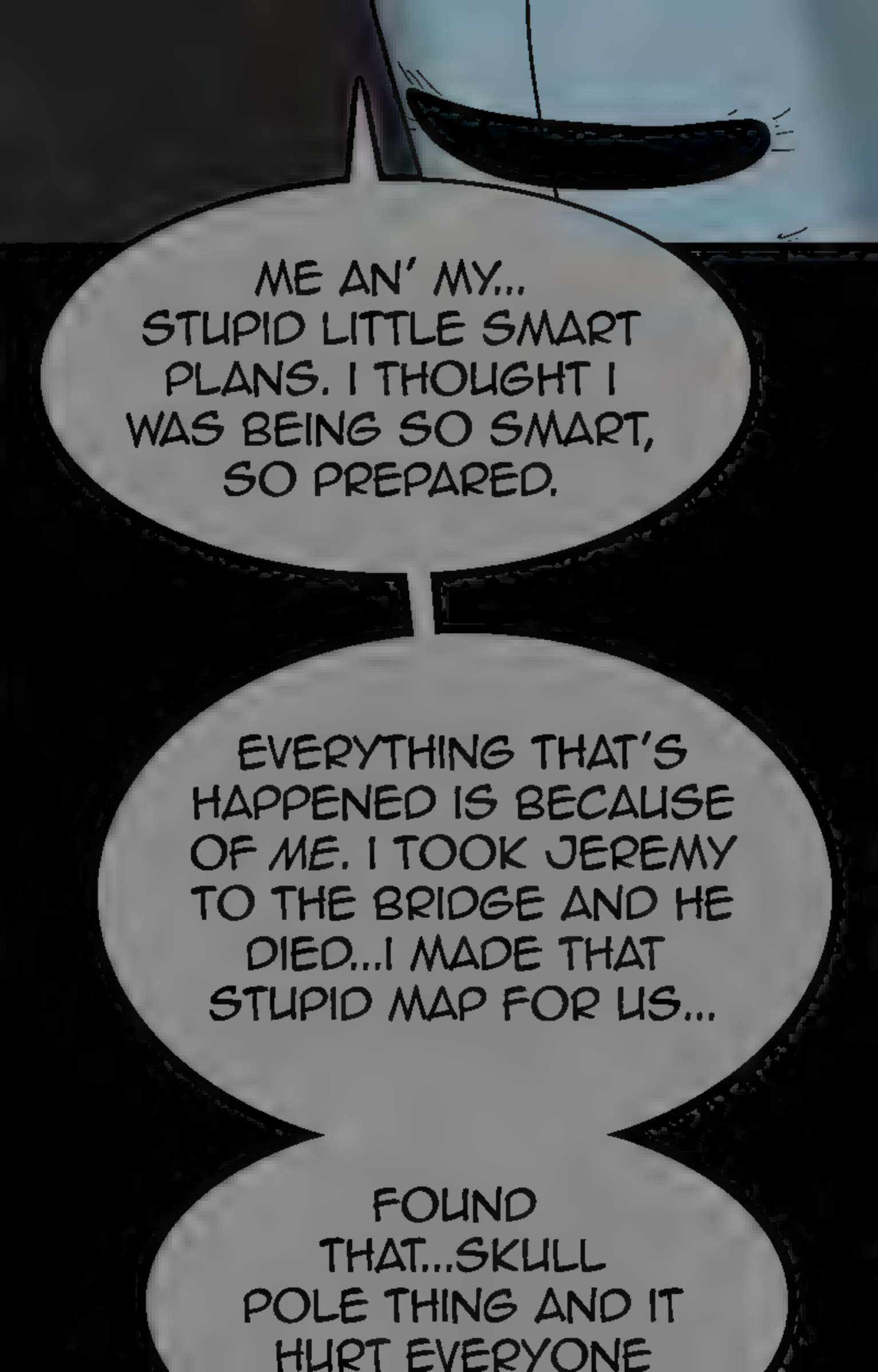
I LET THAT METAL THING OUT OF THE BOX IN JEREMY'S LOCKER.

I-IT WAS TAPED UP, AND I LET IT OUT, LIKE AN *IDIOT.*


I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT...
BUT IT HAD MY LOST KNIFE BUILT INTO IT.
DAMN THING CAN ADD ONTO ITSELF... BUILD ITSELF BIGGER AND WORSE.
AND I-

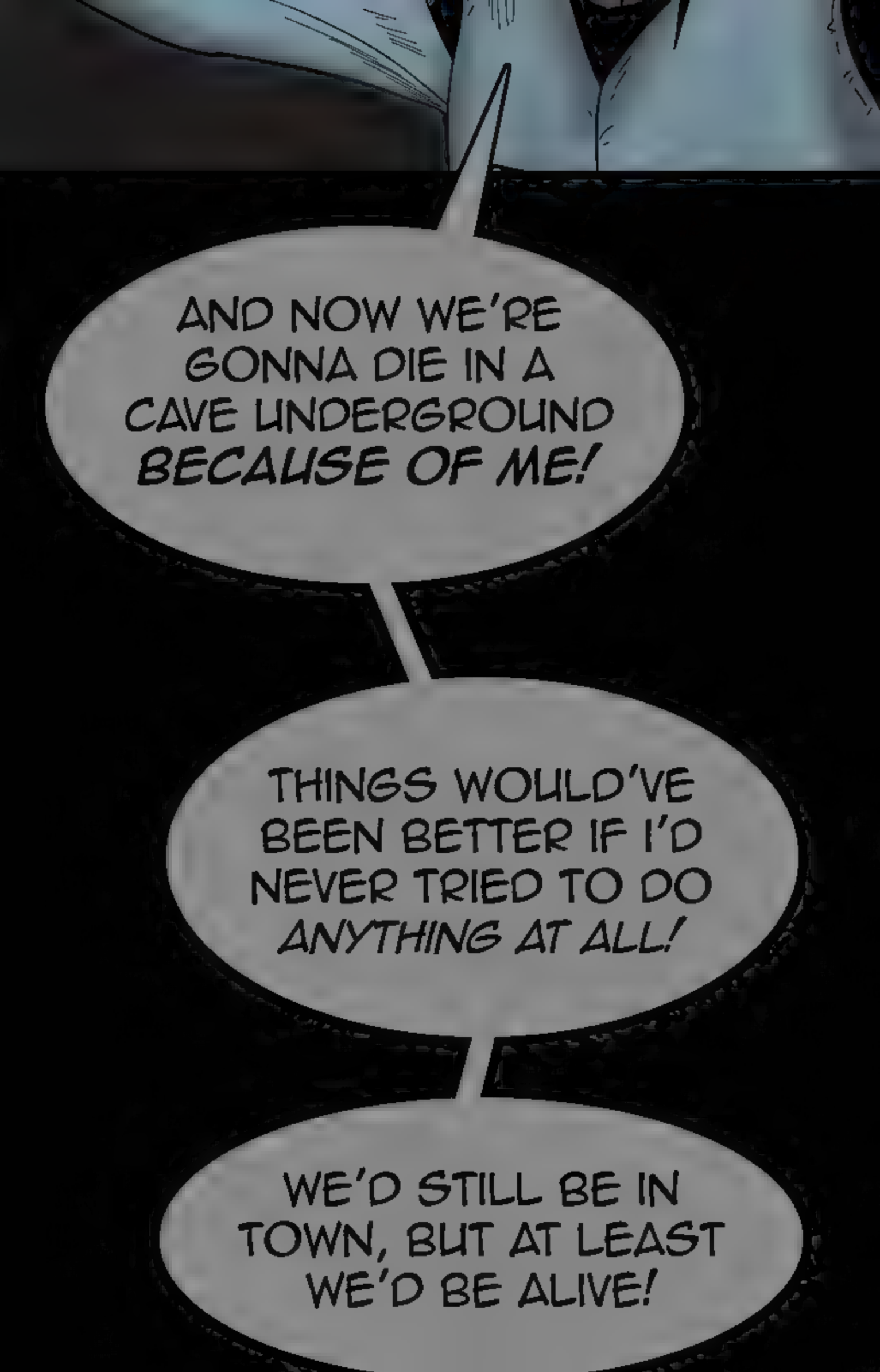
I FROZE UP.
IT CHASED US, IT HURT YOU, AND WHEN YOU NEEDED MY HELP, I CHOKED.

SMART, PRACTICAL FRANKIE.


ME AN' MY... STUPID LITTLE SMART PLANS. I THOUGHT I WAS BEING SO SMART, SO PREPARED.
EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED IS BECAUSE OF ME. I TOOK JEREMY TO THE BRIDGE AND HE DIED...I MADE THAT STUPID MAP FOR US...
FOUND THAT...SKULL POLE THING AND IT HURT EVERYONE

IN TOWN...

LET THAT FIVE THING OUT AND IT HURT *YOU*...


AND NOW WE'RE GONNA DIE IN A CAVE UNDERGROUND *BECAUSE OF ME!*
THINGS WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER IF I'D NEVER TRIED TO DO *ANYTHING AT ALL!*
WE'D STILL BE IN TOWN, BUT AT LEAST WE'D BE ALIVE!

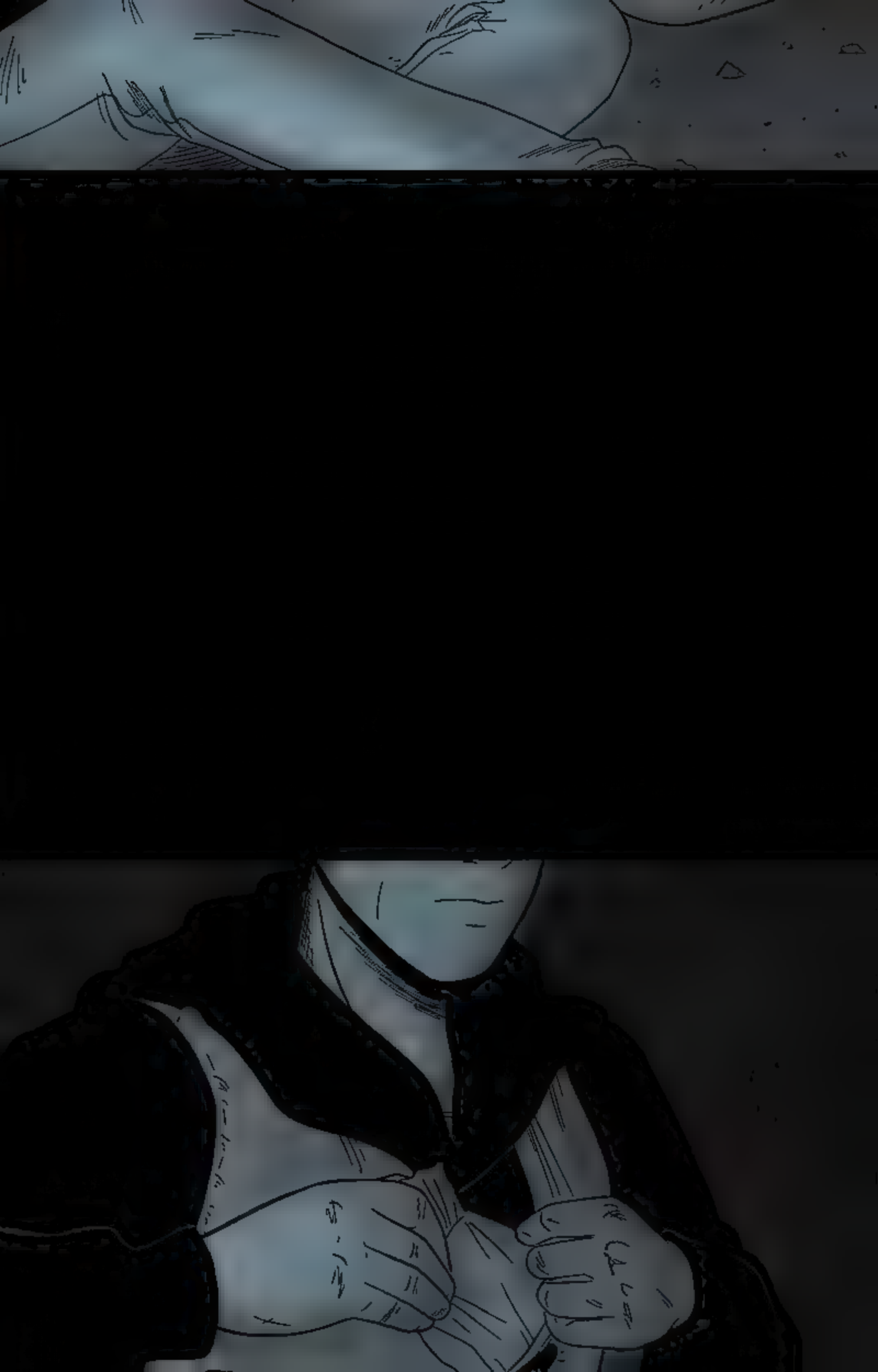
I'M SORRY...
-SNIF-
I-I'M S-S-SO SORRY...

-SOB-

I-I-
-SOB-
SORRY...

SNIF

SNIFF-



KRINKLE
HERE...
GUESS IT'S KINDA FLAT NOW. BUT STILL GOOD.

SNIF-
'M NOT HUNGRY.

SIGH...

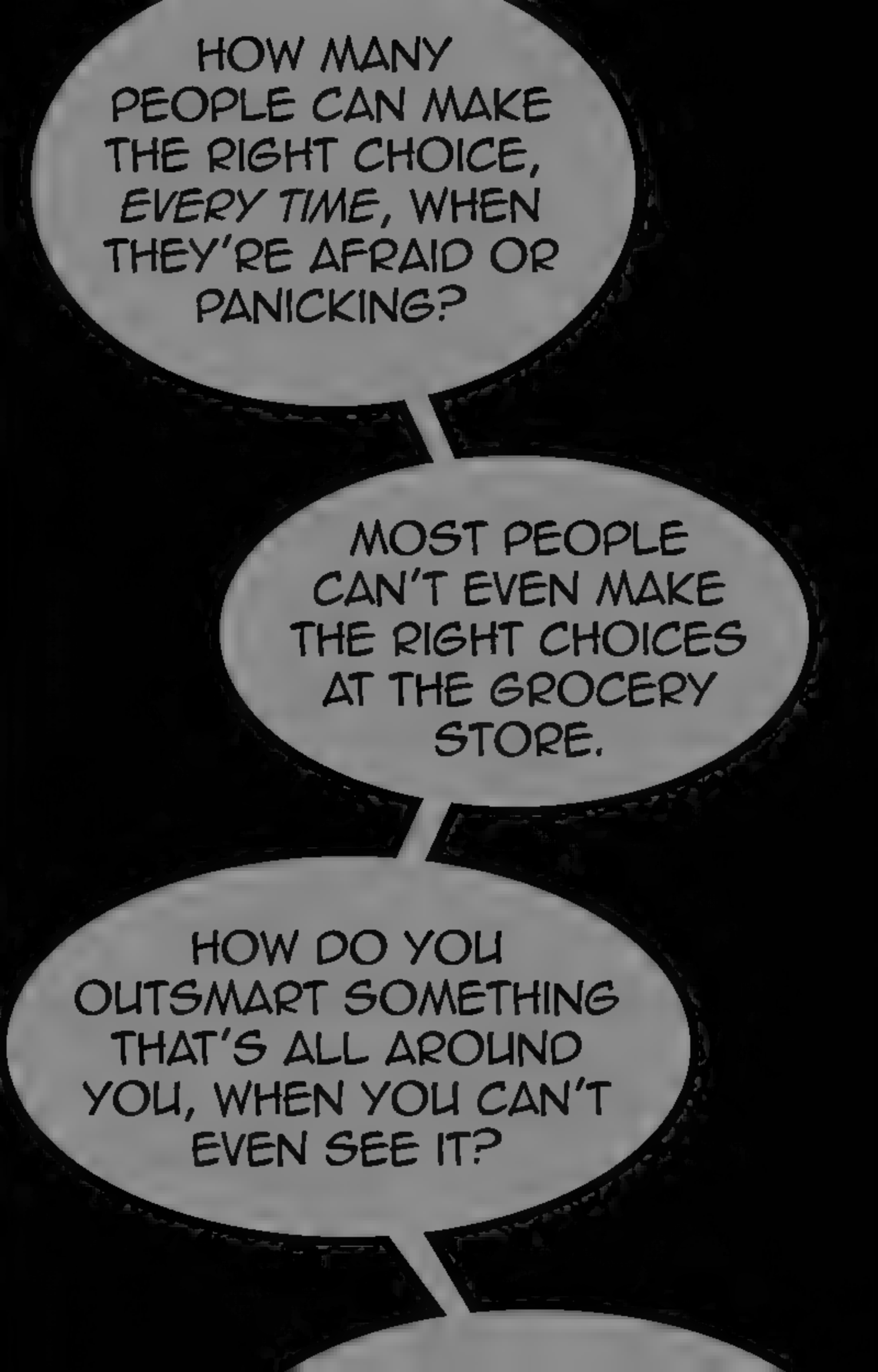
FRANKIE...

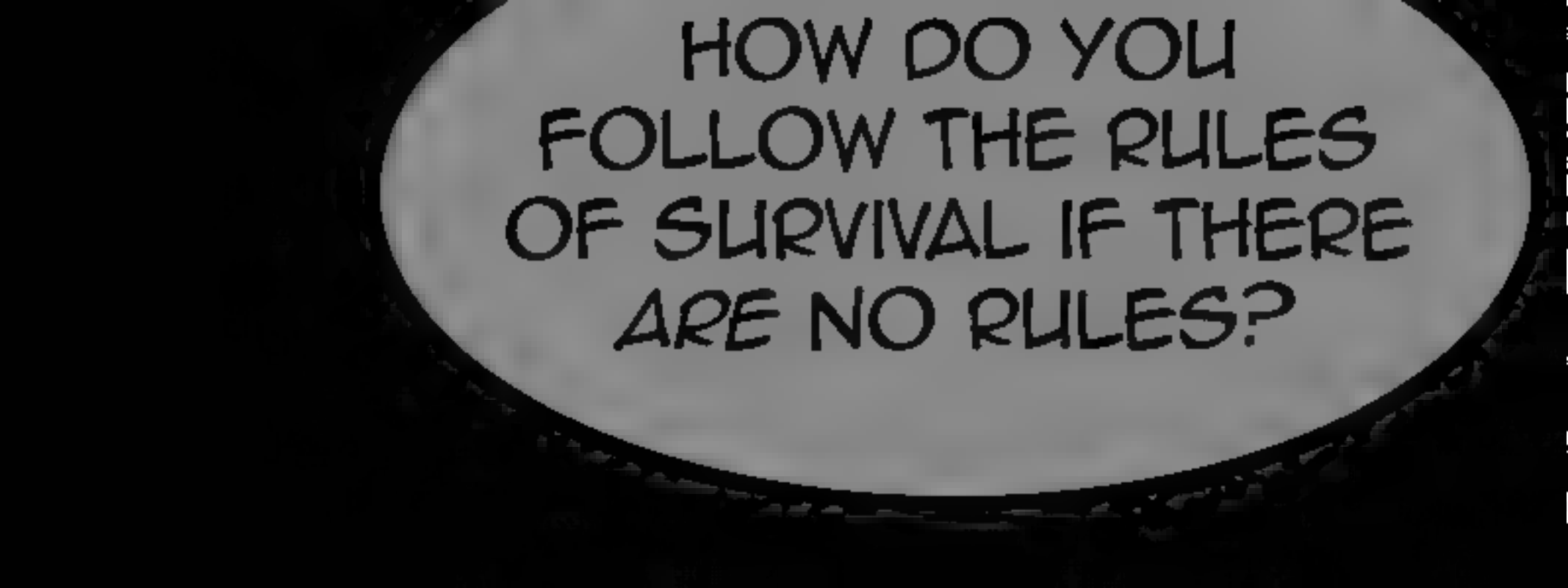
IF THINGS GO BAD IN SPITE OF YOUR VERY BEST EFFORT, THAT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

IT'S NOT LIKE IN THE MOVIES, YOU KNOW?
WHERE EVERYONE MAKES THE RIGHT CHOICES EVERY TIME OUT OF SHEER LUCK, AND ESCAPE JUST BEFORE THE END

CREDITS ROLL.

IT'S SO DAMN EASY TO SAY, I WOULD HAVE DONE THIS, OR I WOULD HAVE DONE THAT...
...ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD TO THINK IT OVER FROM THE SAFETY OF YOUR COUCH.


HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE, *EVERY TIME*, WHEN THEY'RE AFRAID OR PANICKING?
MOST PEOPLE CAN'T EVEN MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICES AT THE GROCERY STORE.
HOW DO YOU OUTSMART SOMETHING THAT'S ALL AROUND YOU, WHEN YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE IT?


HOW DO YOU FOLLOW THE RULES OF SURVIVAL IF THERE ARE NO RULES?

I MADE BAD CHOICES TOO... I SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE ALONE TO THE BRIDGE.

SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN OVERCONFIDENT.
I SHOULD *NOT* HAVE BOUGHT AN INFLATABLE BOAT.
REALLY REGRETTING THAT ONE.

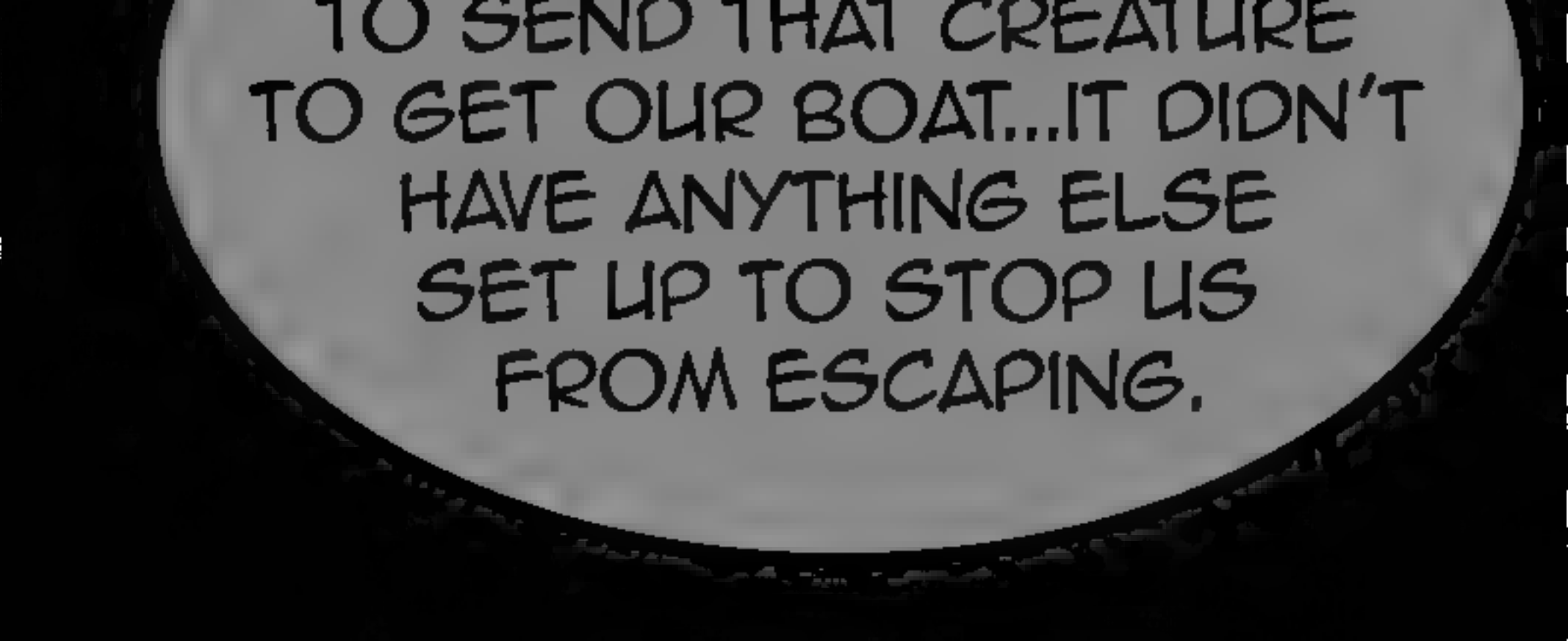
BUT I STILL

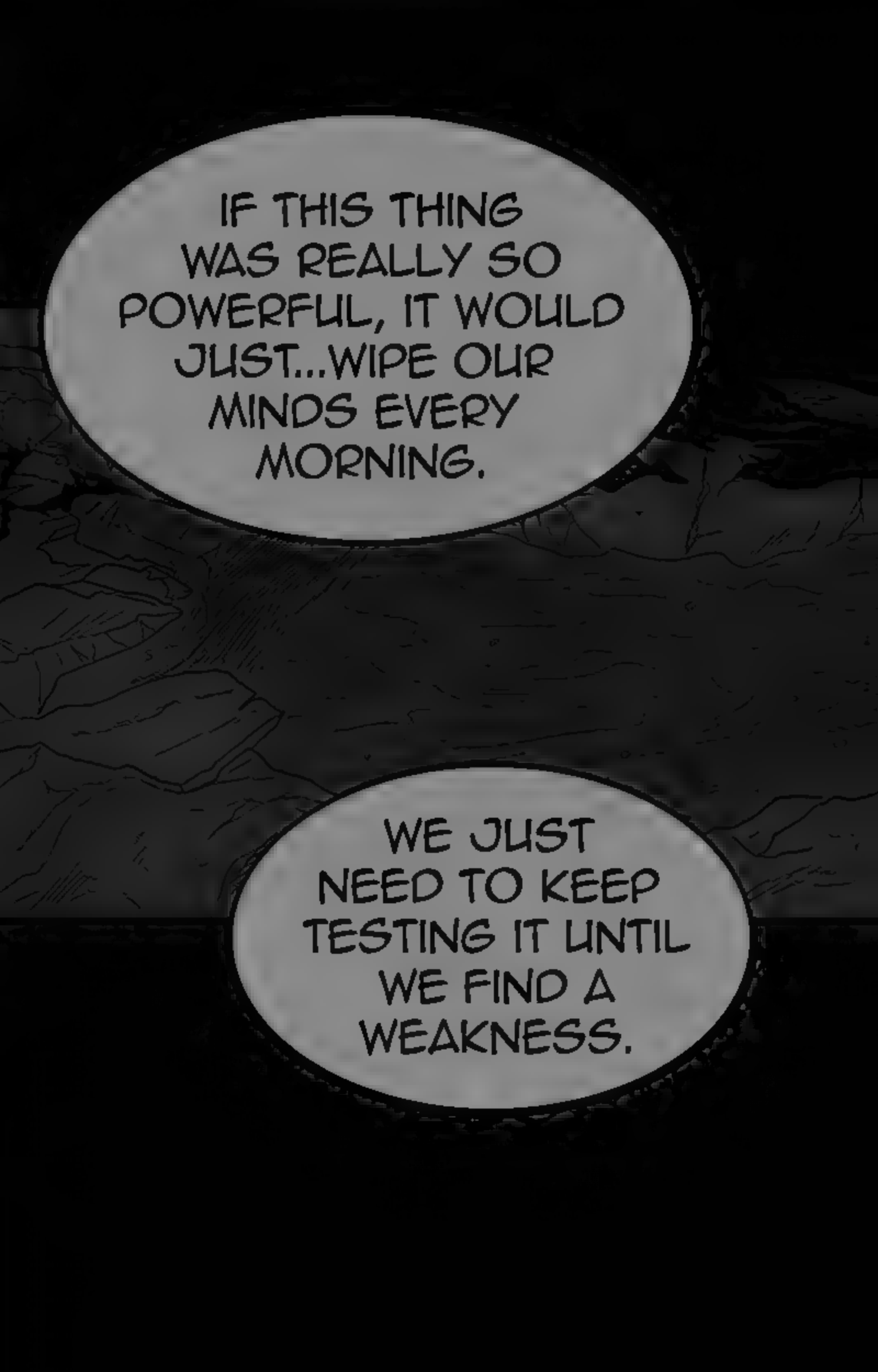
HAVE HOPE.

WE'RE ALIVE, SO WE'RE NOT OUT OF THE GAME JUST YET.

AND HEY, BEING PRACTICAL DID PROVE ONE THING...
WHATEVER'S

INFALLIBLE.
THE EYE SYMBOL
CAN STOP IT. AND IT HAD


TO SEND THAT CREATURE
TO GET OUR BOAT...IT DIDN'T
HAVE ANYTHING ELSE
SET UP TO STOP US
FROM ESCAPING.

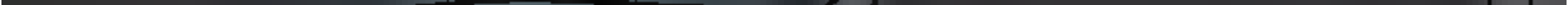

IF THIS THING WAS REALLY SO POWERFUL, IT WOULD JUST...WIPE OUR MINDS EVERY MORNING.
WE JUST NEED TO KEEP TESTING IT UNTIL WE FIND A WEAKNESS.

I BELIEVE YOU'RE DOING THE BEST YOU CAN.

BUT IT DOESN'T *MATTER* IF I BELIEVE IT, IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT YOURSELF.

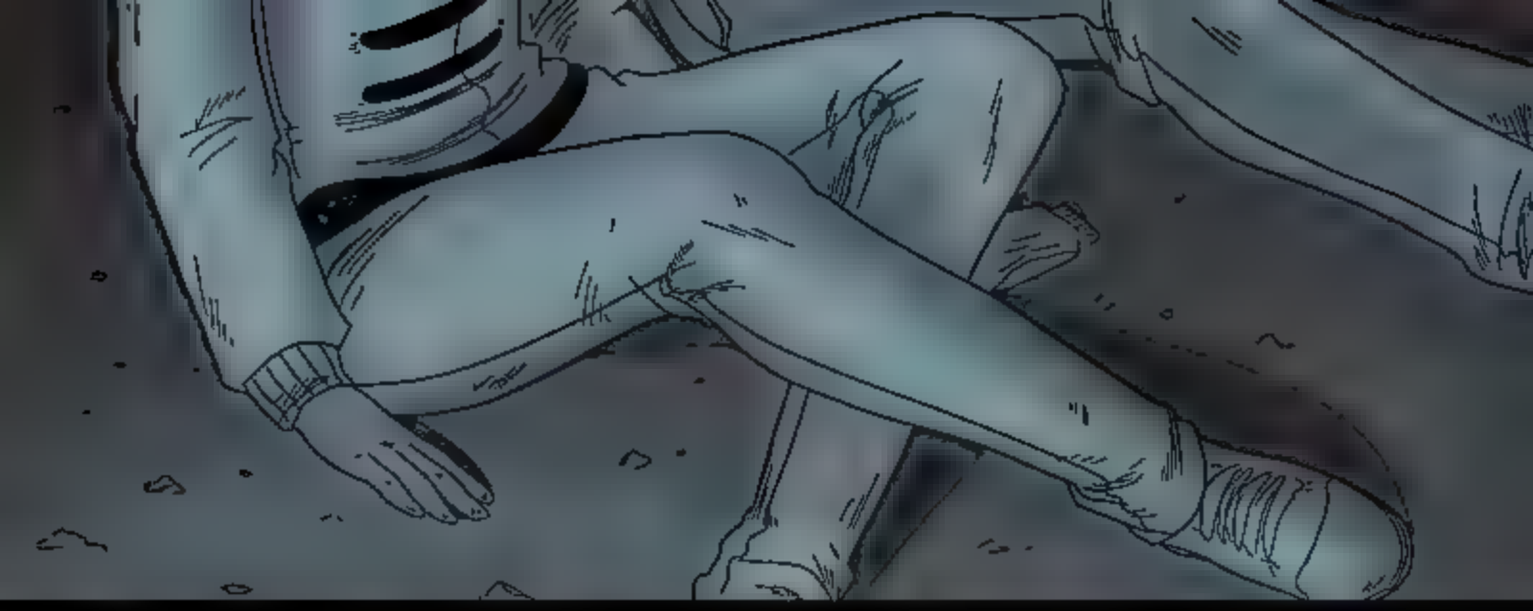
SIGH...

THANKS.



FOR...TALKING ME DOWN.
OR UP. WHATEVER.
EY NO

PROBLEM.
AND HEY, I HAVE AT LEAST ONE BIT OF GOOD NEWS...



GUESS WHAT I GRABBED ALONG WITH THE SNACKS?

TAH-DAH!

FLARES, MINT IN BAG.
HANDHELD FLARES
Be Bright
Be Seen
Be Saved
4 PACK

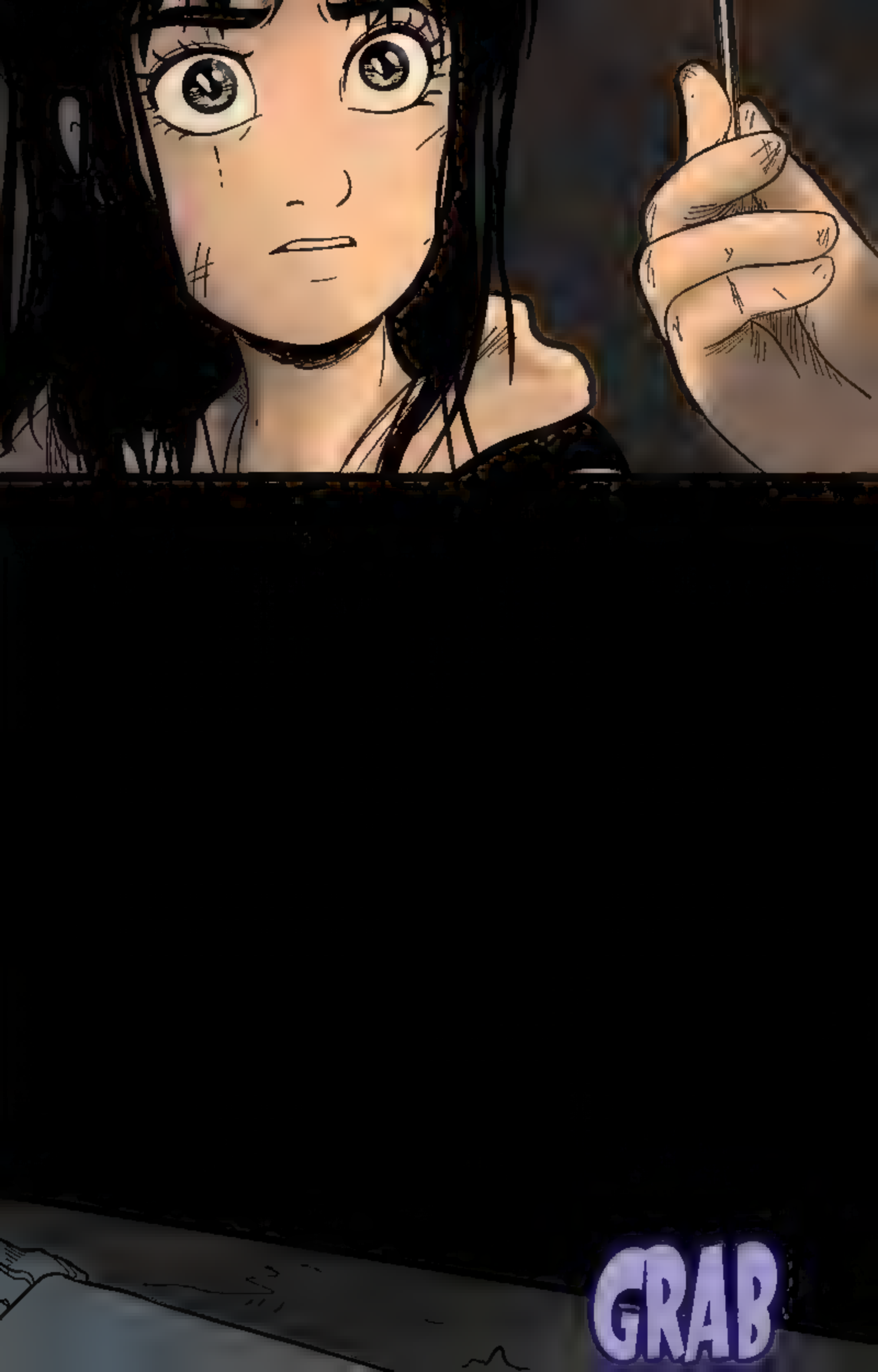
PROBABLY DON'T WANNA LIGHT ANY RIGHT NOW...
THEY EAT UP A LOT OF OXYGEN...
BUT, THEY COME WITH A PACK OF BACKUP MATCHES!

RIIIIIP
BETTER THAN NOTHING.

SKRRITCH

THERE!
PSSSHHH...

NOT AS GREAT AS A FLARE I GUESS, BUT IT WON'T USE UP AS MUCH AIR...
AIR...

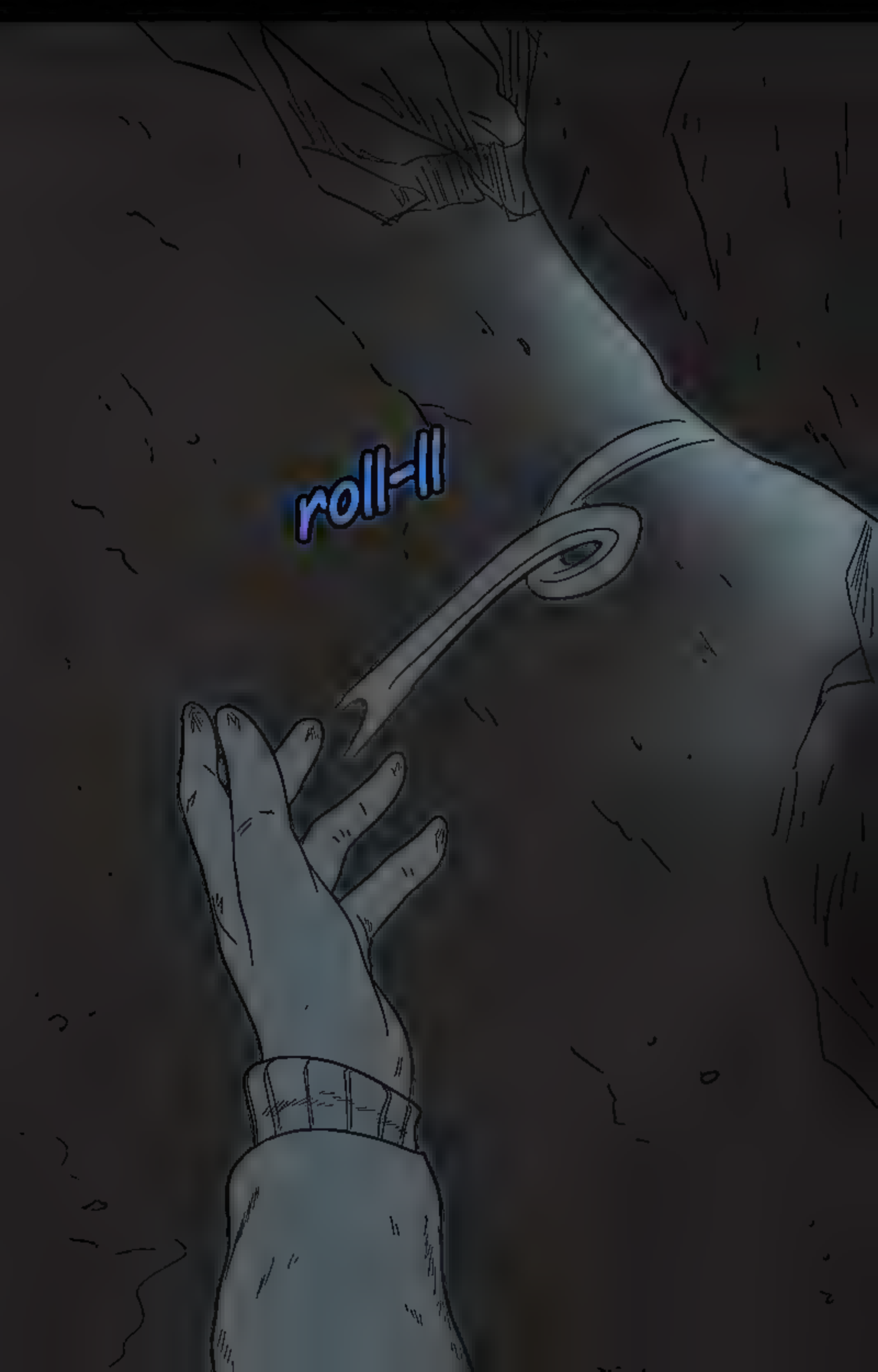

GRAB

FRANKIE?
WHAT'S WRONG?
THAT MATCH

IS FLICKERING IN A DRAFT...
I THINK...
IT'S COMING FROM BACK HERE...

FROM...
SOMEWHERE NEAR HERE...

HMMM...


roll-11

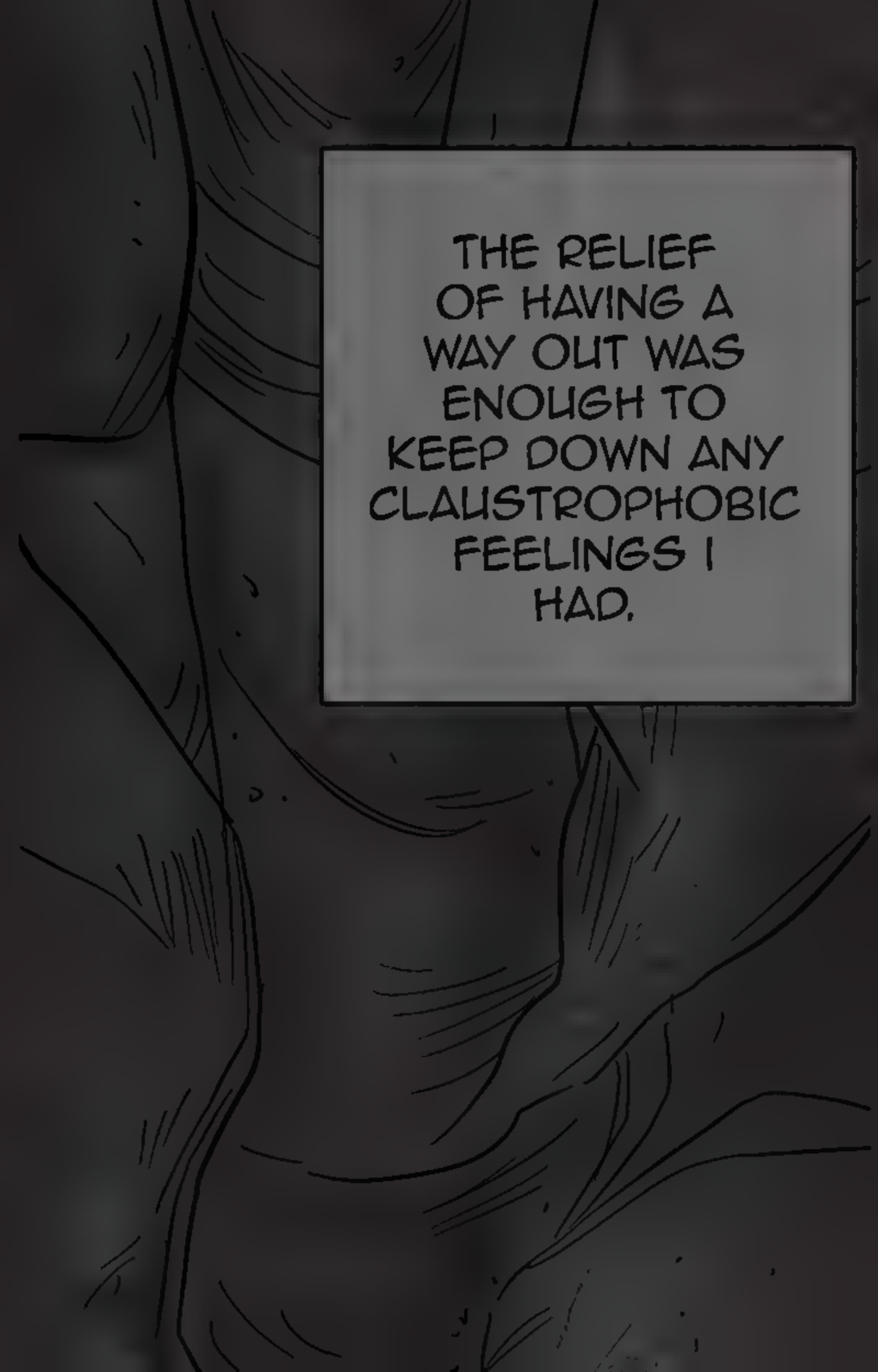
HA!
FELIX!
THERE'S A GAP HERE, IN THE WALL!
I-
I CAN SEE

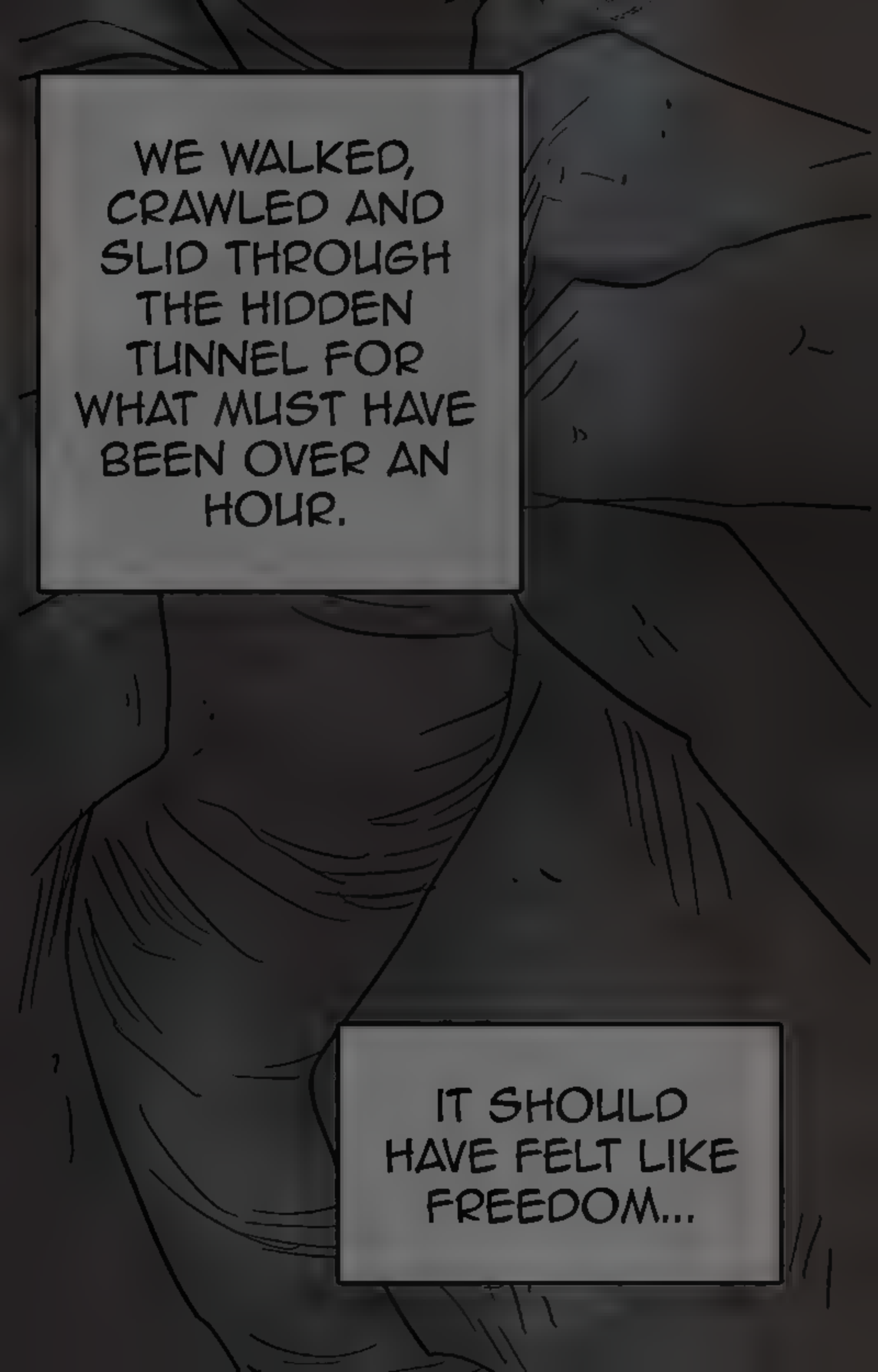
A TUNNEL!
I THINK WE
CAN FIT
THROUGH
HERE!

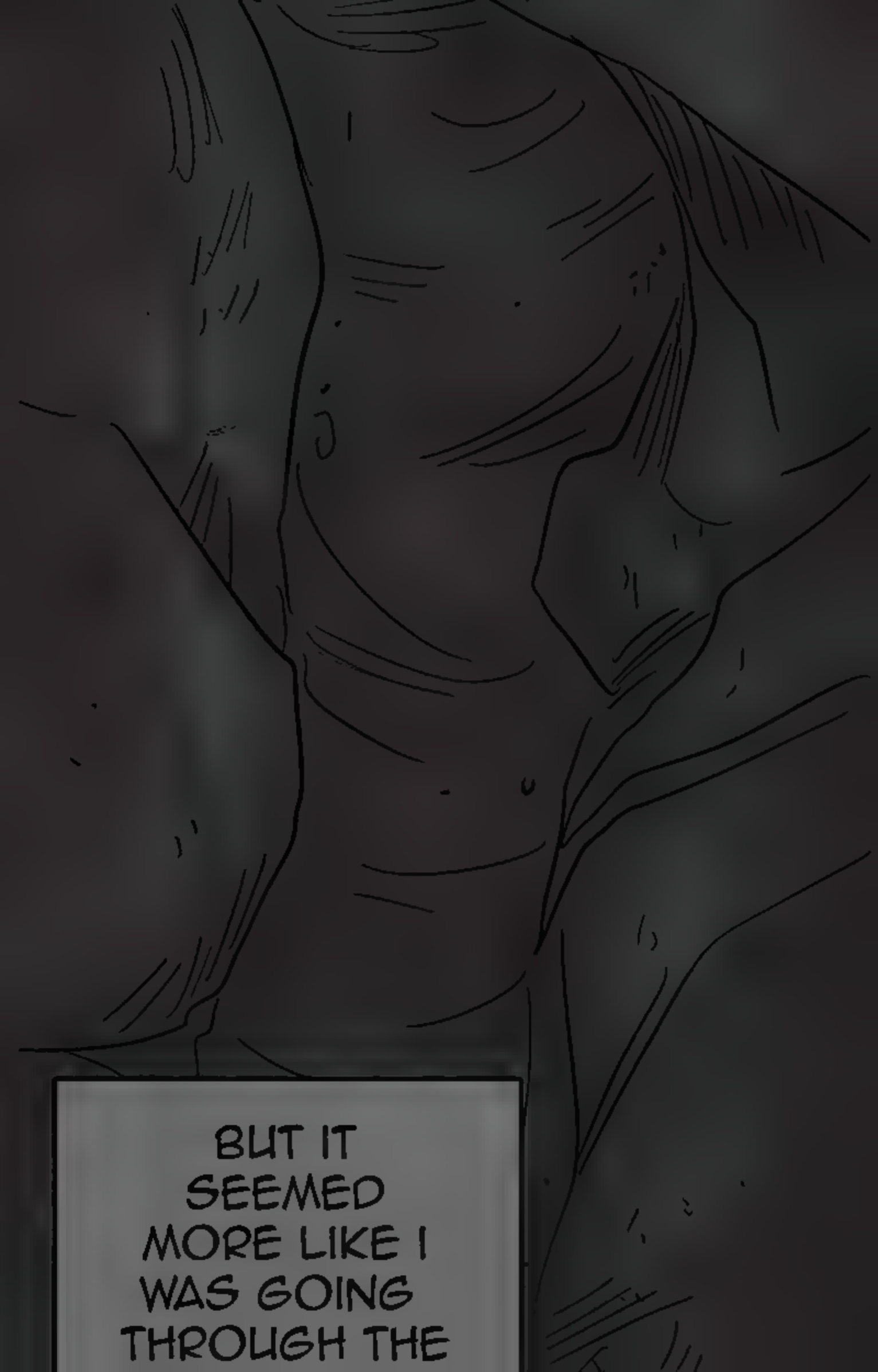
SORRY, WHAT WAS THAT, MISS ALL-MY-PLANS ARE-BAD?
I CAN'T HEAR YOU OVER THE SOUND OF HOW SAVED WE ARE.

HAH...
YOU GONNA BE OKAY IN THERE?
IT'S, YOU KNOW...

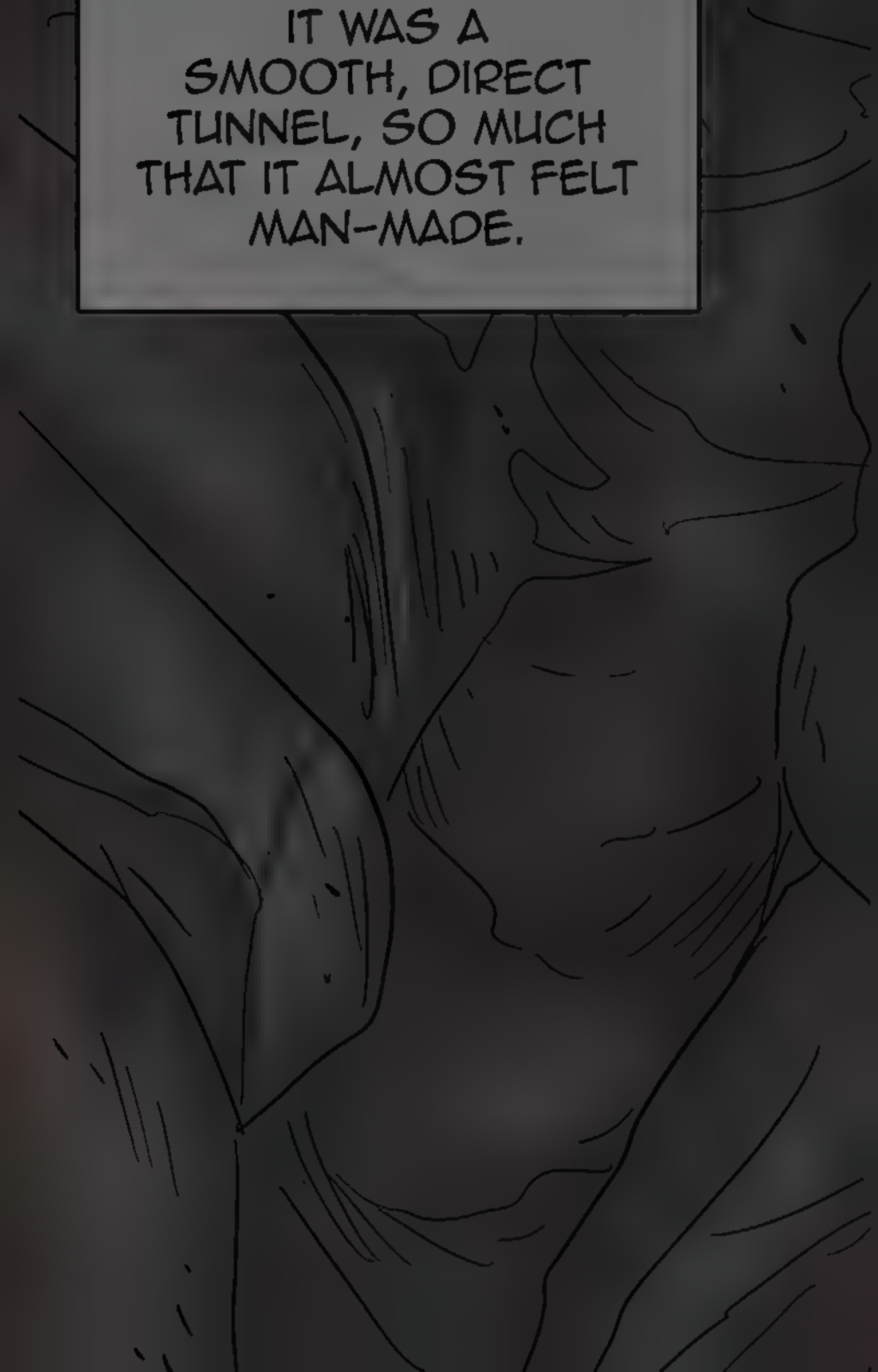
I'LL BE FINE. COME ON!


THE RELIEF OF HAVING A WAY OUT WAS ENOUGH TO KEEP DOWN ANY CLAUSTROPHOBIC FEELINGS I HAD.

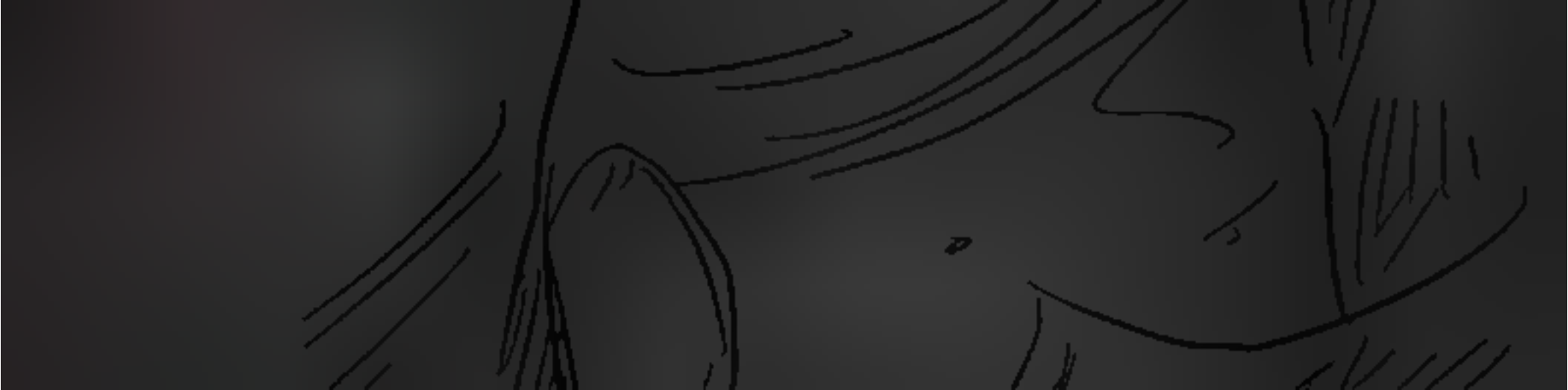

WE WALKED, CRAWLED AND SLID THROUGH THE HIDDEN TUNNEL FOR WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN OVER AN HOUR.
IT SHOULD HAVE FELT LIKE FREEDOM...


BUT IT SEEMED MORE LIKE I WAS GOING THROUGH THE

GUTS OF SOME
GIANT STONE
BEAST.


IT WAS A SMOOTH, DIRECT TUNNEL, SO MUCH THAT IT ALMOST FELT MAN-MADE.

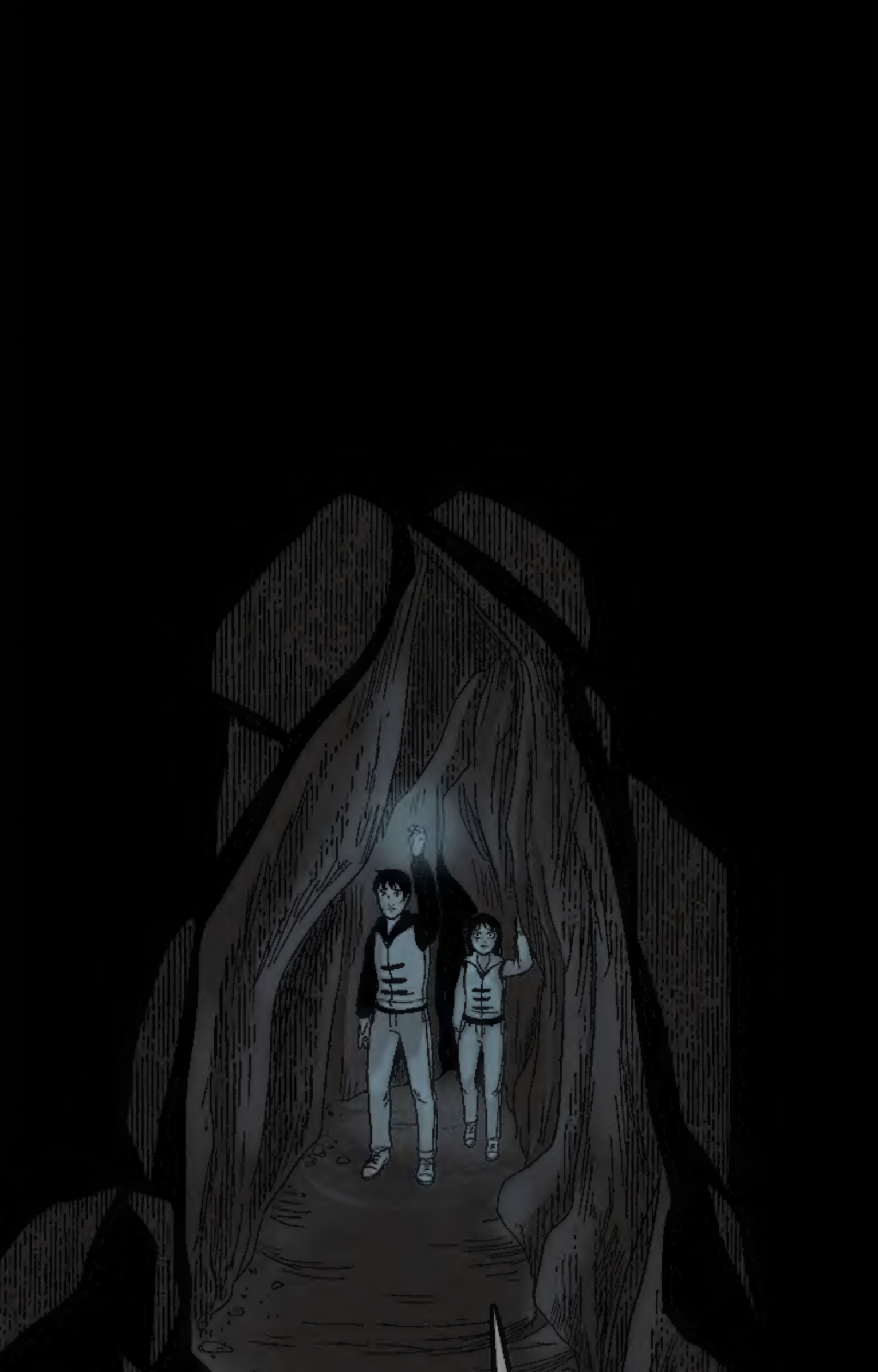
AND IT
SUDDENLY
STRUCK ME...
JUST HOW EASILY
WE HAD FOUND
THE WAY OUT.

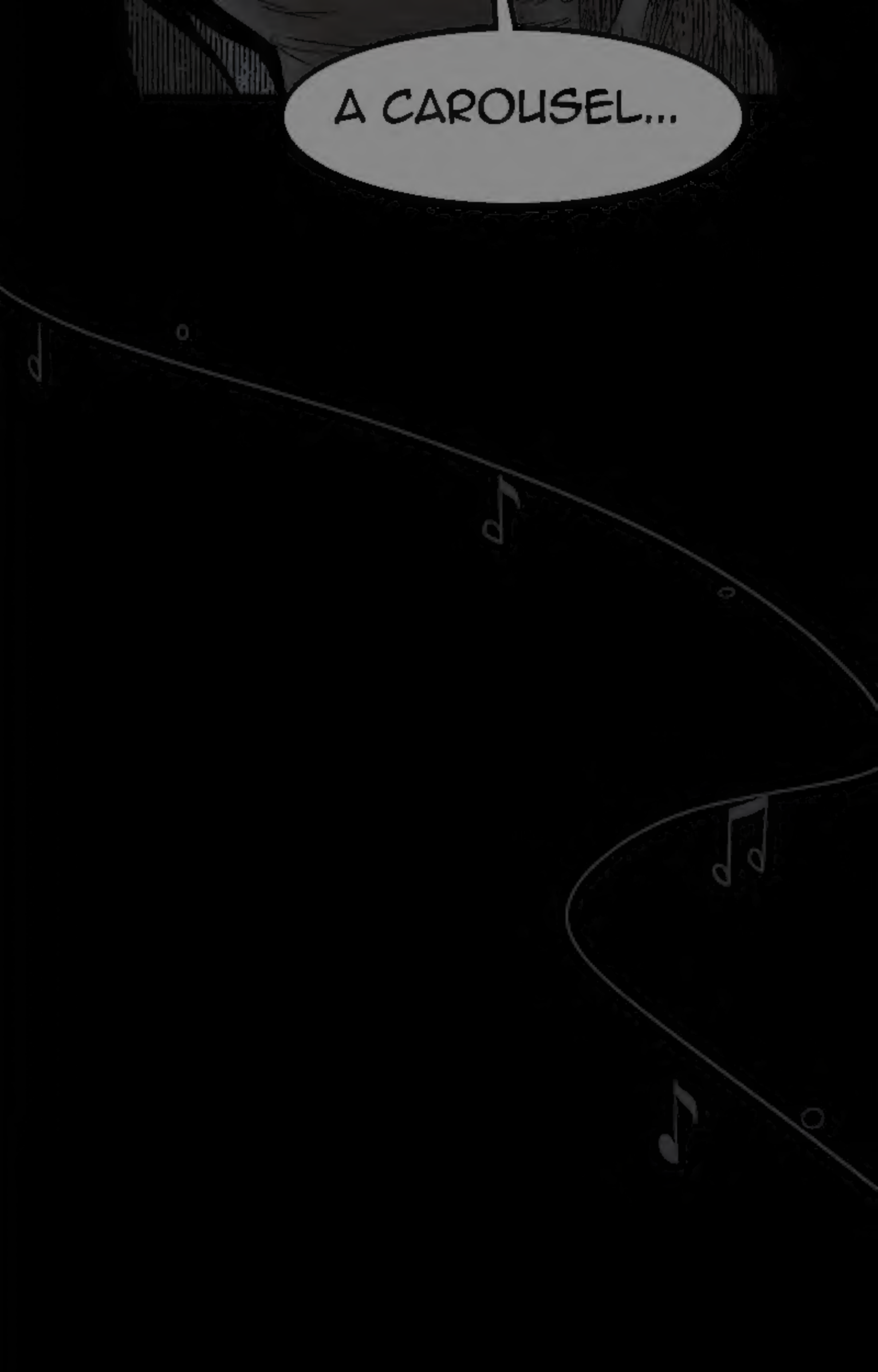


HOW THE HELL LONG IS THIS DUMB TUNNEL...

FELIX...
UP AHEAD...

DO YOU HEAR THAT?
IT SOUNDS LIKE...




A CAROUSEL...